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UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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# THE MADHYAMA VYĀYOGA

A DRAMA COMPOSED BY THE POET BHĀSA  
TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL  
SANSKRIT WITH INTRODUCTION  
AND NOTES

BY

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## PREFACE

It is the purpose of this work to introduce to the English-speaking public the work of one of the greatest names of Sanskrit literature. It is nearly ten years since manuscripts of Bhāsa's plays were discovered, and high time that his dramas should be known, not only to those who may be able to find opportunity to study the sacred tongue of the Hindus, but also to those, who, lacking such opportunity, yet are interested in India, her peoples, and her literature.

In the following translation the prime desideratum has been, not the use of polished English, but the expression of the thought and feeling of the Sanskrit. For India's mind cannot be understood by pouring her ideas into the conventional moulds of our language, but rather by accommodating our modes of expression to the thoughts which at first sight may seem unfamiliar.

I desire to express my deep sense of obligation to Dr. Franklin Edgerton, to whose sane scholarship in his chosen field, patient kindness, and constant readiness to be of assistance, I owe any knowledge of Sanskrit I may now possess. To Pandit T. Gaṇapati Śāstrî my sincerest thanks are due for the valuable assistance in the understanding of the text gained from the Commentary to his Second Edition of the *Madhyama Vyāyoga*. I wish to acknowledge the kindness of W. Norman Brown, Ph.D., Rev. H. H. Sipes, and of many others who have given me so freely the use of their eyes for the accomplishment of my task. Finally, I would record my indebtedness, beyond any power of mine to fulfil, to my dear mother, without whose persistent help and inexhaustible patience this work could never have been completed.

E. P. J.





# INTRODUCTION

## I. BHĀSA AND THE STAGE

THE origin of the Hindu drama is veiled in obscurity, as are so many other origins, despite the excavations and research of scholars. Indian authorities, who never have paid much attention to the science of history, tell us of the archetypal origin of the drama which took place in the heaven of Brahmā, when that god called on Indra and others to enact the destruction of the demon Vṛitra and other famous achievements known to the sacred lore of the Hindus. The earthly beginnings of the dramatic art may possibly be found in the *Samvāda*, or dialogue hymns of the Rig Veda. At any rate, in India as in Greece, the drama seems to have been closely bound up with the religious life and literature of the people. The training of the youth of royalty in the arts of dance and song undoubtedly also contributed to the rise of the dramatic art through performances given to display the accomplishments of the pupils. (Witness the terms *nāṭya*, dance, and *saṃgīta*, song, applied to the drama.) However that may be, by the end of the classical period of Hindu literature (about A.D. 1000), we are face to face with a highly developed and diversified art.

The name of Bhāsa has long been known to students of Indian drama, for he is looked upon by later Hindu dramatists, of the seventh to the twelfth centuries, as one of the fathers of their profession. Many of the literary lights of the period pay their homage to him, bestowing upon him such epithets as “the friend of Agni” (fire), and “the great Bhāsa.” He is mentioned in treatise and romance, and everywhere in terms of the highest admiration. Some eminent Hindu authorities speak of him as on a par with the famous poet and dramatist, Kālidāsa, of the first half of the sixth century, whose *Śakuntalā* has always been recognized as of the highest order. Some authorities give us a few of the features and characteristics of Bhāsa’s work. Thus Jayadeva (ninth century), comparing him with Kālidāsa, says that “Bhāsa is the laughter of poetry, Kālidāsa is its grace.”



But though we had heard much of this great literary light, and even the names of some of his plays, apparently nothing more tangible remained of all his marvelous achievements. We had learned of the drama called “Svapnavāsavadattā,” and in 1910 this play was discovered by Pandit Anandalvar of the Archæological survey of Mysore. Two years later Pandit T. Gaṇapati Śâstrî, editor of the “Trivandrum Sanskrit Series,” having obtained manuscripts of thirteen of Bhāsa’s plays, published them in his collection. Hence we have from Bhāsa more dramas than from any other Hindu composer. In 1917 Gaṇapati Śâstrî was fortunate enough to secure a second manuscript of the Madhyama Vyāyoga, which served to correct and improve the earlier text published by him. He therefore re-edited this play with a Sanskrit commentary in pamphlet form; and it is on this second edition of our drama that the translation in the present work is based.

As to the date of our author, there is much uncertainty. Dr. Sten Konow places him in the last quarter of the second century A.D., while Winternitz assigns him to the fourth century of our era. Dr. Max Lindenau, in his *Bhāsa-studien*, inclines to the earlier date. It is certain that his period was earlier than that of Kālidāsa, for the latter mentions him in one of his works.

Since the time of the discovery of these plays a considerable discussion has arisen as to whether they are actually the great Bhāsa’s handiwork. Into this discussion it is not my purpose to enter, more than to register the fact that the present trend seems to be toward admitting that the plays discovered are the work of the reputed author. The Madhyama Vyāyoga, a translation of which is offered in the following pages, is one of these.

Before entering upon the play itself it may not be amiss to say a few words with regard to the stage and staging of the Sanskrit drama. Sanskrit dramatic productions fell into two main classes, and these were subdivided into several heads, depending on the theme, the manner of treatment, the time taken by the scene which was depicted on the stage, etc. The Hindu scholiasts have always had a mania for reduction to a rule of thumb under categories, and they made no exception of the stage. The outstanding characteristic of the first of these two classes is the use of poetry in the production, while in the second class song and dance are the preponderating elements. The “Vyāyoga” is

a species of play belonging to the first class, as will easily be seen when the play is read. This species of production is said to have received its name from the fact that the plot represents the characters as being “violently separated” (*vi-ā-yuj*) from each other. The theme of the Vyāyoga must be heroic, and there must be a fight in the action, but the sentiment of love is excluded: the motive for the fight may not be a woman. If love is brought in at all, it must be simply as an embellishment, and have nothing to do with the main theme. Moreover, the action must cover only one day. Such are the restrictions laid upon him who would compose a play of this class. For these heroic representations the material could easily be obtained from those inexhaustible wellsprings of valiant and heroic deeds, the great Sanskrit Epics of the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa; and of the eight titles of Vyāyogas known to Sylvain Lévi, the standard Western authority on Sanskrit drama, five had their source in the Mahābhārata. Up to his day (1890), only one had been published, *viz.* the “Dhanamjaya Vijaya,” or “Arjuna’s Victory,” dealing with the time of the end of the period of disguise forced upon the Pāṇḍava princes, and the disclosure of their identity through the prowess of Arjuna, one of their number, the setting of which is given in a later section of the present introduction. Up to the present, as far as can be ascertained, no production of the Vyāyoga category has been made accessible to the English-reading public.

The apparent paradoxes of life are a most interesting study; and the Western world can appreciate these paradoxes better when it beholds them in a people who are in many ways so very different from themselves. And here, in the production and presentation of the dramatic art in India, we have an opportunity to examine one of these strange anomalies.

While the output of plays of various sorts was so large, and while the theorists had laid down such hard and fast rules to govern this production, there appears never to have grown up in India, as there did in Greece, any specific place for dramas to be presented. If the play were in honour of some god, it might be presented in his temple; or, if for the delectation of some royal patron, the palace was the place for its performance. But theaters, as such, never appeared in India. The explanation may possibly be found



in the fact that the language of the stage was Sanskrit, only the women and servants being represented as using the Prākṛits (dialects spoken in ancient times). Hence the stage never became an amusement for the masses, but only for the few who could understand Sanskrit; and as this part of the public was connected either with temple services or with kings' courts, it was unnecessary to erect other places for the presentation of dramas.

There being no place set apart for this purpose, there was likewise no scenery used, and the imagination of the audience was depended on entirely to fill in the vacancies caused by this lack. Thus when the king is represented as mounting his chariot, he steps upward and forward with both feet, but brings them back to their former position. Everything is done in pantomime, and the spectators must supply the rest. The stage furniture and accessories consist of four classes: the first includes rocks, celestial cars, and the armor worn by the actors; the second comprises the clothes and ornaments; the third is the living beings themselves, the actors; and the fourth is paint.

This last is very important in the presentation of a drama; for the color of the curtain which forms the background of the scene and the colors of the costumes of the various performers are carefully prescribed by the theorists on dramatic art, and, being known by the audience, are of great assistance in the understanding of the play. Thus the curtain should be white for an erotic play, black for tragedy, vari-colored for comedy, somber for horrible, red for violent, yellow for heroic, etc. The various modes of dress and the various colors prescribed help the audience to tell what stations in life the different actors occupy. Kings should wear bright-colored costumes; to fools, the distressed, and travelers is assigned a somber hue; superhuman beings, as gods and demons, are to be clothed in vari-colored or streaked costumes, etc. Hence if a spectator knows the prescribed rules and regulations, he can, with the help of the introductory remarks of the attendants, pretty accurately understand what he is about to see.

As to the stage itself, it is, as already pointed out, almost devoid of furniture. The background of the scene is formed by a curtain of some fine stuff of the color appropriate to the character

of the drama to be staged. This curtain separates the stage from the *nepathya*, or “behind the scenes,” whence the actors enter. This apartment is prescribed to be at the west of the stage, though there is a roundabout approach to it from an eastern exit. When an actor enters, the curtain is raised for him by two little girls of exceptional beauty, who are assigned to that work. But should the entrance be precipitate, the actor violently tears aside the curtain and enters without further ado.

A drama cannot be enacted without due rites. The actors must enter the audience-room with the audience itself, and the latter must arrange itself according to the prescribed order around the patron of the drama. Then begins the *nāndi*, a series of twenty-two ceremonies carefully prescribed, the object of which is to propitiate, by hymn and prayer and auspicious utterance, the gods who might otherwise interfere with the successful performance of the drama. This ended, the stage director or his assistant comes forward and introduces the actors, who then proceed with the play.

## II. GENERAL HISTORICAL SETTING

To those who have even a passing acquaintance with classical Hindu literature, it will be unnecessary to introduce the personage who plays the leading part in this drama; for the figure of the mighty Bhīmasena, or Bhīma, is a familiar one to any who have scanned the pages of the great epic poem of the Mahābhārata, which is so vitally a part of the thought of the Hindus. But it may not be inappropriate to refresh the memory with regard to Bhīma's ancestry, and the main events of his life as related to the present production, or to introduce his wife, Hidimbā, and his son, Ghaṭotkacha, and give such other information as the sources may furnish with regard to the characters presented to us in the Madhyama Vyāyoga.

According to tradition, there were ruling in ancient India two lines of kings, the Solar and the Lunar, which occasionally became connected with each other through marriage. The heroic deeds of the Solar dynasty are celebrated in the epic of the Rāmāyaṇa, while the Mahābhārata deals with those of the Lunar kings. It was to the latter that Bhīmasena belonged. His ancestry is traced back to Soma, the moon, and to Soma's father,



the sage Atri. Twenty-second in descent from Soma came the great Bharata, from whom the family of the Bhāratas and the epic just referred to took their name. Ninth from this great king came Kuru, the ancestor alike, be it remembered, of the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas of the time of our play. Fourteenth from Kuru was King Śāntanu, whose son, Vicitravīrya, was born to him by Satyawatī, who had already born the sage Vyāsa to the sage Parāśara. Thus Vyāsa and Vicitravīrya were half-brothers. The latter married two wives, Ambikā and Ambālikā, but died childless. Then his half-brother Vyāsa married the two widows, and “raised up seed unto his brother,” for from the one was born Dhṛitarāshṭra, and from the other Pāṇḍu. The first of these half-brothers married a princess by the name of Gāndhārī, who bore Duryodhana and his ninety-nine brothers. Pāṇḍu had two wives, but no children of his own. However, Kuntī, his first wife, was possessed of a charm given her by a certain sage to whom she had been attentive, through the use of which she might have children by any god she wished; and, being permitted by her husband to make use of the charm, she had three sons, Yudhishṭhira, Bhīma and Arjuna, by the three gods Yama, Vāyu and Indra, respectively. The second wife, Mādrī, being likewise childless, bore, through the operation of the same charm, the twins, Nakula and Sahadeva, by the Aśvins, the twin heavenly physicians. These five boys were therefore in reality semi-divine, but were the reputed sons of Pāṇḍu, and hence received the patronymic “Pāṇḍava.” They are at times also called “Kurus” or “Kāuravas” (cf. “Yudhishṭhira, King of the Kurus,” page 32, line 21), though these names are usually applied to their cousins Duryodhana and his brothers, who are also called “Dhārtarāshṭras” (sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra, cf. page 40, line 25). It may be of interest to add here that Kuntī belonged to another branch of the Lunar line and was an aunt of Kṛishṇa, the incarnation of the god Viṣṇu and the teacher in the popular philosophico-religious poem, the Bhāgavad Gītā.

But in order to understand the historical setting of our drama, we must do more than merely get the genealogical facts about the Pāṇḍava and Kuru princes; we must review briefly some of the doings of the sovereigns of the Kuru dynasty.

Śāntanu, it will be remembered, was the grandfather of both Dhṛitarāshṭra and Pāṇḍu. At his death, Dhṛitarāshṭra being



blind, Pāṇḍu, the younger, became king, but later decided to resign the throne and retire to a life in the forest to indulge his passion for hunting. Eventually, having been told by a sage that he would die in the embrace of his wife, he became an ascetic. Thus the kingdom came under the sway of Dhṛitarāshṭra, who carried on the affairs of State with the wise advice and regency of his uncle Bhīshma. At a later date he installed as heir-apparent Yudhisṭhira, the eldest of the Pāṇḍavas, and a year older than Duryodhana, the eldest of the sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra. Yudhisṭhira gained such renown by his achievements in peace and war that he became a great favourite with the citizens, who determined to displace the blind old king and to crown the Pāṇḍava prince without further delay. When word of this plan reached Duryodhana, he took counsel with his associates to make away with all five of his cousins. He had them invited to a festival in a neighbouring city, where they were to be accommodated in a house constructed of lac and other inflammable materials, which was to be burned down while they were asleep. But the Pāṇḍavas learned of this stratagem, had an underground exit dug, and thus escaped. They had, however, induced an outcaste woman with her five sons to come into the house, so that when the charred bodies should be found the Kurus might think that their cousins had perished. It was during the flight from this house of lac that they met Hidimbā, were saved by her from her cannibal brother, and received her as the wife of Bhīmasena. As she and her son Ghaṭotkacha are important personages in our drama, more will be said of this meeting hereafter.

After dwelling in disguise at the house of a Brāhman for some time, at a town called Ekachakra, they gained strength by an alliance with the powerful king of the State of Pañcāla, and Dhṛitarāshṭra found it more politic to divide the kingdom between them and their Kuru cousins. The latter he allowed to rule at his own capital, Hastināpura, while to the former he assigned a district near the Jamna, where they built the city of Indraprastha, the modern Delhi.

But the jealous Kurus were not content with this arrangement. Duryodhana knew that Yudhisṭhira was passionately fond of the dice, so he induced a master of the game to challenge the king of Indraprastha to play with him. Yudhisṭhira accepted,

and, staking one thing after another, lost all, including his kingdom. Unfortunately for the Kurus, a compromise was arranged whereby the Pāṇḍava princes were to be exiled for twelve years and were to spend the thirteenth in disguise, after which time they were to receive back their kingdom. It is during this twelve-year period that the scene of our drama is laid, while the brothers are in retirement in the forest. During the thirteenth year they take various positions at the court of King Virāṭa, but, according to stipulation, are *incognito*. As the year comes to an end, they reveal their identity and make preparations to reclaim and regain their lost empire. They inform Duryodhana that they are ready to make peace with him, if he will give up to them their rightful share of the kingdom, and they try by every means in their power to bring about a peaceful settlement ; at the same time they follow a strenuous program of preparedness, calling their allies to gather for the impending conflict. Duryodhana and his brethren, however, have no mind to live up to their agreement, and prepare for war. This war, the preparations for it, its single combats and general engagements, are described in Books V to XII of the Mahābhārata in picturesque, thrilling, but most verbose detail, till one wearies of the welter of blood, the combats of innumerable heroes, and the heavenly and demoniacal prodigies that make up the narration. In this war, as will be seen later, the Pāṇḍavas have a valiant ally in Ghaṭotkacha, who engages and kills a number of heroes of the Kāurava army before he himself succumbs to the weapon of Karna.

In the end the Kurus are hopelessly defeated, and all the brothers killed, whereupon Yudhisṭhira is able to assume the throne of the empire unchallenged. He tries several times to resign, because haunted by the thought of the carnage it has cost to win the throne, but is induced to continue as sovereign. In the end the five brothers decide to resign the world, and they journey together to Indra's heaven in Mount Meru, with Yudhisṭhira at their head. One by one they fall by the way and die, but their leader presses onward, till he is translated to the place of his desire in the chariot of the god himself, and spends eternity in blissful reunion with all his princely family.



### III. CHARACTERS OF THE MADHYAMA VYĀYOGA

Among the characters of this play, Bhīma is by all odds the best known and most important, and he takes up so large a place in the Mahābhārata that to mention all the incidents of his history as there depicted would require a volume in itself. Consequently we shall review his career only so far as it is relevant to this drama, and not burden the reader with a multitude of detail. His son, the rākshasa Ghaṭotkacha, though appearing quite frequently in the epic, is nevertheless one of the minor characters as compared with the great heroes of the war. But a detailed description of the places where he appears would be wearisome and uncalled for, and we shall consider only some of the more important passages, which will give a picture of the character and accomplishments of this mighty son of Bhīmasena. Of his mother, Hiḍimbā, the epic does not say much, and we can give all necessary details in a short space. Concerning the Brāhman Keśava-dāsa and his family we can learn nothing beyond what is found within the drama itself.

The first detailed introduction of Hiḍimbā to Bhīma is given in Mahābhārata I, 154 ff., where Bhīma is found with his mother and brothers in the forest after their escape from the house of lac. Kuntī and the other Pāṇḍavas are asleep, while Bhīma guards them. A rākshasa, named Hiḍimba, who with his sister Hiḍimbā dwells in the branches of a tree, senses the presence of human beings, desires human flesh for his next meal, and sends his sister to find out who these people are. “And, going there,” the narrative proceeds, “she beheld the Pāṇḍavas asleep with their mother, and the invincible Bhīmasena sitting awake. And beholding Bhīmasena, unrivaled on earth for beauty, and like unto a vigorous Sāl tree, the rākshasa woman immediately fell in love with him, and she said to herself, ‘This person of mighty arms, of broad, lion-like shoulders and so resplendent, of neck marked with three lines like a shell and eyes like lotus-leaves, is worthy of being my husband. I shall not obey the cruel mandate of my brother.’ Thus saying, the rākshasa woman, capable of assuming any form at will, assumed an excellent human form, and began to advance with slow steps towards Bhīma of mighty arms. Decked with celestial ornaments, she advanced with smiles on her lips and a modest gait.”

She then tells Bhīma of the cruel intention of her brother, asks him to be her husband, and offers to rescue both him and the rest of the party. This offer Bhīma refuses. She fears for his safety in combat with her brother, but Bhīma declares, "Rākshasas are never able to bear the prowess of my arms." In the course of these remarks he addresses Hiḍimbā as "of handsome eyes," "of delicate shape," "of slender waist," and "of fair hips." Then Hiḍimba, becoming impatient at his sister's delay, approached, "and he saw her disguised in human form, her head decked with garlands of flowers, and her face like the full moon, and her eyebrows and nose and eyes and ringlets all of the handsomest description, and her nails and complexion of the most delicate hue, and herself wearing every kind of ornament and attired in fine transparent robes."

Being enraged at her disguise and her desire for Bhīmasena, Hiḍimba first abuses and then tries to kill his sister. Whereupon Bhīma interposes, and challenges the ogre, who in fury attacks the mighty Pāṇḍava. "The dust raised by their feet in that encounter looked like the smoke of a forest conflagration, and, covered with dust, their two huge bodies resembled two tall cliffs enveloped with mist." Finally, "Bhīma raised the body of the rākshasa high in mid-air and whirled it a hundred times, and dashing him on the ground with all his might, slew him as if he were an animal. Then the ogre, while dying, sent forth a terrible yell that filled the whole forest, and deep as the sound of a wet drum. Then the mighty Bhīma, holding the body in his hands, bent it double, and breaking it in the middle, greatly gratified his brothers," who had been awakened by the sound of the conflict and had been urging Bhīma to make an end of the ogre without delay.

After this victory, the ogress (rākshasa woman) appeals to Kuntī to unite her with her son Bhīma, and offers to come to them whenever they think of her and to convey them wherever they desire to go. Thereupon Yudhishṭhira makes an arrangement with Hiḍimbā whereby Bhīma is to stay with her during the day-time until she bears him a son, on condition that she brings him back to his family at night. Hiḍimbā, agreeing, "took Bhīma on her body and sped through the sky. On mountain peaks of picturesque scenery and regions sacred to the gods, abounding



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pieces, hurling him down on the earth, like a man crushing an earthen pot into fragments by hurling it against a rock. Endowed with strength and activity, and possessed of great prowess, the son of Bhīmasena, inflamed with wrath in battle, inspired all the troops with fear.” (VII, 109 ff.)

Another antagonist of our ogre was Aśvatthāman, son of Droṇa, a very celebrated character in the epic. By him Ghaṭotkacha was worsted after a long and minutely described conflict, in which the illusions of both the antagonists were displayed in great variety. I quote a few sections, merely to give an idea of these illusions :

“Ghaṭotkacha, making himself invisible, created an illusion. He assumed the form of a high mountain, crowded with cliffs and trees, and possessing fountains from which ceaselessly flowed spears and lances and swords and heavy clubs.” When this was dispelled by Aśvatthāman, Ghaṭotkacha “became a mass of blue clouds in the firmament, decked with a rainbow, and began furiously to shower upon Droṇa’s son a downpour of stones and rocks.” That illusion having likewise been made to vanish, Ghaṭotkacha next came “with a large number of rākshasas resembling lions or tigers or elephants, some riding on elephants, some on cars, and some on steeds.” But these also are beaten back and destroyed by Aśvatthāman. Later, by the aid of a great shaft, he severely wounds Ghaṭotkacha, so that the latter has to be carried off the field of battle.

After his recovery and the destruction of the ogre Alāyudha, Ghaṭotkacha’s final and fatal conflict was with Karṇa, a son of Kuntī by the god Sūrya (the sun) who, however, fought on the side of the Kuru princes against the other sons of his own mother. After Ghaṭotkacha had used against Karṇa various sorts of illusions, all to no effect, the latter took up a death-dealing javelin given him by Indra, which he had saved to use against Ghaṭotkacha. “Beholding that excellent and blazing weapon, the rākshasa began to fly away in fear, assuming a body as gigantic as the foot of the Vindhya mountains. . . . Destroying that blazing illusion of Ghaṭotkacha, the resplendent dart, piercing right through his breast, soared aloft in the night and entered a starry constellation in the firmament. . . . This also is another exceedingly wonderful feat that the rākshasa accomplished for the destruction of his

foes, namely, that at the time when his heart was pierced by that dart, he shone resplendent like a mighty mountain or a mass of clouds. Having assumed that terrible and awful form, Bhīmasena's son of frightful deeds fell down. And when dying, he fell upon a portion of thy<sup>1</sup> army and pressed those troops down by the weight of his own body. Quickly falling down, with his gigantic and still increasing body, desirous of benefiting the Pāṇḍavas, he slew a full Akshāuhini<sup>2</sup> of thy troops, while he himself breathed his last." (VII, 180 ff.)

The foregoing references to the characters in our play as they appear in the Mahābhārata, are by no means complete, but they may be enough to give some idea of the personages with whom we shall become further acquainted in the pages of the Madhyama Vyāyoga.

#### IV. THE PLOT OF THE DRAMA

After preliminary rites, the stage-director appears and pronounces blessing upon the audience assembled to witness the performance ; which benediction is addressed to the god Viṣṇu, who is the Preserver and hence interested in the action that is about to be put on. As he is pronouncing the benediction, a noise is heard behind the scenes, which interrupts the stage-director, and he introduces the actors—an aged Brāhman, accompanied by his wife and three sons, and followed by an ogre, Ghaṭotkacha.

After this introduction the stage-director leaves, and the performance takes its course.

The Brāhman and his family are very much surprised and alarmed by being pursued by Ghaṭotkacha, and describe his fearful aspect in a series of verses. The ogre bids them stop, and tells them that he has been ordered by his mother to bring a man for her to devour, but agrees to let the rest of the family depart in peace, provided one of them will sacrifice himself to satisfy the ogre's mother. The middlemost in age of the three sons offers to go and is accepted, but asks permission to go to a lake and slake his thirst and perform purificatory ablutions. He goes, but overstays

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<sup>1</sup> Thy, *i.e.* Dhṛitarāshṭra's, to whom the story is being told.

<sup>2</sup> An Akshāuhini consists of " 21,870 elephants, 21,870 chariots, 65,610 horse, and 109,350 foot " (M. Williams' *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*).



his time, whereupon the ogre, learning that his name is Madhyama [rendered Middleman in this play] calls him loudly. Thereupon Bhīma, who has been exercising in the vicinity, responds (Madhyama being an epithet of his also) and shortly recognizes his son Ghaṭotkacha, but not being recognized by the latter determines to try out his prowess. He offers to go in place of the Brāhman lad, but refuses to be taken by force. Ghaṭotkacha, failing in his attempt to force him, falls back on Bhīma's offer to go of his own accord. He goes to call his mother Hidimbā, who appears on the scene, upbraids him for not recognizing his own father, and forces him to apologize. She also explains to Bhīma, her husband, the motive which prompted her to the attack on the Brāhman family, namely, to bring Bhīma back to herself. The Brāhmans, being delivered, take leave of their benefactor, who, on their departure, proposes to his wife and son to accompany them to their destination. The play then closes with another verse addressed to Viṣṇu.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

KEŚAVADĀSA, a Brāhman.

HIS THREE SONS.

GHAṬOTKACHA.

BHĪMASENA.

KEŚAVADĀSA'S WIFE.

HIDIMBĀ, an Ogress, Wife of Bhīmasena and  
Mother of Ghaṭotkacha.

# MAY THERE BE PROSPERITY!

Reverence to the exalted Ganesha,<sup>1</sup>

The Madhyama Vyāyoga,<sup>2</sup>

Composed by the Great Poet, the Exalted Bhāsa.<sup>3</sup>

[*The invocation being ended, enter Stage-Director.*<sup>4</sup>]

STAGE-DIRECTOR: “May the foot of Viṣṇu<sup>5</sup> protect you, which caused dejection to the hearts of the wives of the Asuras,<sup>6</sup> and which, blue<sup>7</sup> as a lotus<sup>8</sup> or stainless sword, was raised aloft in the stride that covered the three worlds, and shone like a pass made of cat’s-eye<sup>9</sup> through the sky-ocean. (1)

“Ladies and gentlemen of the audience, I [*beg to*] inform you as follows:—But stay! What is this! As I am on the point of making the announcement, it seems to me I hear a sound. Well, I’ll see!”

*Behind the Scenes:*

“O sir,<sup>10</sup> who under heaven is this?”

STAGE-DIRECTOR: “Well, now I perceive!

“By the pronounciation of the word bhos<sup>11</sup> it is clear that it is a Brāhman, who is frightened by some bold villain bent on evil.” (2)

*Behind the Scenes:*

“O sir, who under heaven is this?”

STAGE-DIRECTOR: “Ah, it is perfectly clear!

“This is certainly the son of the Pāṇḍava<sup>12</sup> Middleman,<sup>13</sup> sprung from Hiḍimbā as mother,<sup>14</sup> a fire of an ogre who is frightening a Brāhman family which has committed no act of hostility. Oh, alas! alas! for the plight of the Brāhman, surrounded by his wife and children! For here—

“Surrounded by his wearied young sons, comes this<sup>15</sup> aged Brāhman with his wife, pursued by an ogre, and bewildered like a bull with his cow and frightened calf, when chased by a tiger.” (3)

[*Exit.*]

[*Here ends the Introduction.*<sup>16</sup>]

[*Enter Keśavadāsa surrounded by his three sons and wife, and behind him Ghaṭotkacha.*<sup>17</sup>]

BRĀHMAN : “ Alas ! who under heaven is this !

“ With hair disheveled like the far-spreading rays of the new-risen sun, with long<sup>18</sup> yellow eyes that flame from their frowning sockets, like a cloud gleaming with lightning and wearing a [*golden*] necklace,—he is shaped as an image of Śiva<sup>19</sup> [*coming*] for the destruction of the age.”<sup>20</sup> (4)

FIRST SON : “ Alas ! father, who under heaven is this !

“ With eyes [*flaming*] like a pair of planets, with broad distended chest, his hair golden-brown, with clothes of yellow silk, in colour a mass of darkness, but with his projecting teeth gleaming white, he is like a black cloud through which shines the digit of the moon.” (5)

SECOND SON : “ Oh, who is this !

“ With teeth like the tusks of a young elephant, his nose the shape of a plough, with arms like the trunk of a noble elephant ; having the colour of a black cloud, he, shining like the fire of the sacrifice, stands blazing fearful as the wrath of Śiva the destroyer of the city of Tripura.”<sup>21</sup> (6)

THIRD SON : “ Alas ! father ! who under heaven is this that afflicts us !

“ He is as the fall of a thunderbolt to the lordly mountains, the eagle to all the birds, the lion to the assemblies of wild beasts, Death, in human form.” (7)

BRĀHMAN'S WIFE :<sup>22</sup> “ My Lord, who is this that harasses us ? ”

GHAṬOTKACHA : “ O Brāhman, stop, stop !

“ You, the heart of whose courage is destroyed by fear of me, powerless to guard your terrified wife and children, why are you going away, like a harried snake with his mate, hot from the furious fire raised by the wind from the tips of the wings of Garuḍa ? ”<sup>23</sup> (8)

“ O Brāhman, stand still ! stand still ! ”

BRĀHMAN : “ Wife, do not fear ; children, do not fear ; for his speech indicates discernment.”

GHAṬOTKACHA : “ Alas !

“ I know that absolutely everywhere and always the Brāhmanas are most to be honored on the earth ; yet I must put aside compunctions and do this forbidden thing to-day at the behest of my mother.” (9)



BRĀHMAN: "Wife, do you not remember that that honorable muni,<sup>24</sup> Jalaklinna,<sup>25</sup> said that we should go cautiously through this wood infested with ogres? The very danger he spoke of has befallen us."

BRĀHMAN'S WIFE: "Why, now my lord seems rather unconcerned!"

BRĀHMAN: "What shall I do, poor wretch that I am?"

BRĀHMAN'S WIFE: "Well, we can at least call for help!"

FIRST SON: "Madame, to whom shall we call?"

"For this is a deserted wood whose horizon is obstructed by various kinds of trees looking like piles of darkness.<sup>26</sup> Its interior is filled with birds and wild beasts, too, suited for the dwellings of hermits." (10)

BRĀHMAN: "Wife, don't be afraid, don't be afraid! My terror is almost dispelled by hearing that this place is fit for the abode of hermit folk. I think the hermitage of the Pāṇḍavas cannot be far from here.

"Now, the Pāṇḍavas are fond of weapons, kind to those who come for refuge; they take the part of the wretched, and perform deeds of prowess; and they are able to suitably punish in this world<sup>27</sup> those who do such terrible things." (11)

FIRST SON: "Alas, father! I fear the Pāṇḍavas are not there."

BRĀHMAN: "My son, how do you know?"

FIRST SON: "I heard from a certain Brāhman coming from that hermitage that they have gone to the hermitage of the great Rishi,<sup>28</sup> Dhāumya,<sup>29</sup> to attend the sacrifice called Śatakumbha."<sup>30</sup>

BRĀHMAN: "Alas! we are lost!"

FIRST SON: "But, father, not all are gone. Middleman (Bhīma) is stationed here, you know, to guard the hermitage."

BRĀHMAN: "If that is so, *all* the Pāṇḍavas are surely in the vicinity."<sup>31</sup>

FIRST SON:<sup>32</sup> "But I hear that he, too, at this time is in a distant place, to engage in athletic exercises."

BRĀHMAN: "Alas! we are without hope. Well, then, my son, I'll just throw myself upon his [*Ghaṭotkacha's*] mercy."

FIRST SON: "Have done, have done with [*such fruitless*] labour."<sup>33</sup>

BRĀHMAN: "Son, surely entreaty (such as I propose) is the foe of despair."

FIRST SON : “ Very well, just let us see. Ho, friend ! is there any escape for us ? ”

GHAṬOTKACHA : “ There is escape—on condition— ”

BRĀHMAN : “ What condition ? ”

GHAṬOTKACHA : “ I have an honored mother. She thus commanded me : ‘ Son, you must hunt down some man in this forest and bring him here that I may end my fast.’<sup>34</sup> Therefore have I come after your honor.

“ If you wish deliverance for yourself and two of your sons, along with your virtuous wife, recognize your strength and weakness and give up one son.” (12)

BRĀHMAN : “ O worst of ogres !<sup>35</sup> Am I not a Brāhman ?

“ If I, an aged and learned Brāhman, give a son of virtuous character to a man-eater [*Ogre*] how can I<sup>36</sup> attain happiness ? ” (13)

GHAṬOTKACHA : “ If you do not give up one of your sons at my request, noble Brāhman, you will be destroyed with your whole family this very instant.” (14)

BRĀHMAN : “ Wife, this is my firm decision :

“ My body has done its duty and is infirm through age. It has been hallowed through the performance of sacred rites. Out of regard for my sons I shall sacrifice it in the fire of the ogre.”<sup>37</sup> (15)

BRĀHMAN’S WIFE : “ No, my lord, not so, for a devoted wife has no duty save towards her husband.<sup>38</sup> With this body which has borne its fruit<sup>39</sup> I wish to save my lord and family.”

GHAṬOTKACHA : “ My lady certainly does not want women folk. You must give up that idea.”

BRĀHMAN : “ I myself will follow you, sir.”

GHAṬOTKACHA : “ Humph ! You’re too old : be gone ! ”

FIRST SON : “ Father, now I should like to say something, if you please.”

BRĀHMAN : “ My son, say on.”

FIRST SON : “ With my life I wish to protect the lives of my elders. That I may save this family, pray, sir, let me go ! ” (16)

SECOND SON : “ No, no, sir ; not so !

“ The oldest is the best in the family and in the world, and to the departed<sup>40</sup> he is especially dear. Therefore I rather will go, for I am mindful of the proper behaviour toward my elders.” (17)



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GHATOTKACHA: "Since your resolve is fixed,<sup>50</sup> go. My mother's meal-time is past. Come back quickly."

SECOND SON: "Father, here I go." [*Exit.*]

BRĀHMAN: "Alas! alas! we are robbed, we are robbed!"

"My family was [well-established like] a three-peaked mountain, charming to my heart; now the breaking of the central peak severely distresses my heart. (23)

"Alas, son! Are you really gone!"

"O youth, possessed of charm like that of Youth itself, devoted to religious duties, with mind intent on the study of the Sacred Word, can it be that you are going to destruction like a flowering tree, broken by the tusk of a mighty elephant!" (24)

GHATOTKACHA: "The Brāhman lad is certainly taking a long time. My mother's meal-time is past. What on earth shall I do? All right—I have it! Brāhman, call your son."

BRĀHMAN: "Assuredly your command is too terrible even for an ogre."

GHATOTKACHA: "How angry he is! Pardon, pardon, your honor! This is the fault of my nature.<sup>51</sup> Well, then, what is your son's name?"

BRĀHMAN: "Even this I cannot tell you."

GHATOTKACHA: "Yes, that is right,<sup>52</sup>—Brāhman youth, what is your brother's name?"

FIRST SON: "The ascetic Middleman."<sup>53</sup> [*Madhyama.*]

GHATOTKACHA: "Middleman suits him. I myself will call him.<sup>54</sup> Ho, Middleman, ho Madhyama, come quickly!" [*Enter Bhīmasena.*<sup>55</sup>]

BHĪMASENA: "Hello! Whose voice is this?"

"That sounds aloud in this wood, which is [*already*] resonant with the screams of hundreds of birds, thick-set with trees and densely compact? Moreover, this voice produces in me mental anguish, for it is very like the voice of Arjuna."<sup>56</sup> (25)

GHATOTKACHA: "The Brāhman lad certainly is taking a long time. My mother's meal-time is past. What on earth shall I do? Very well, I have it! I'll make a big noise!—Hello! hello Middleman! come quickly!"

BHĪMASENA: "Who on earth is it in this wood who interrupts my athletic exercise, and calls me, 'Middleman! Middleman!' Very well—just let us see. [*He walks around and looks about him.*] Oho! this fellow is worth looking at! For he

“Has the mouth and teeth of a lion, eyes the colour of honey, a pleasing, deep voice, brown eyebrows, an eagle’s nose, the jaw of a lordly elephant, and long, disheveled hair. With his broad chest, his waist like a vajra,<sup>57</sup> with the gait of a mighty elephant, and long, stout-shouldered arms, it is evident that he is the offspring of an ogress,<sup>58</sup> and, being endowed with tremendous strength, he is clearly the son of a world-hero.”<sup>59</sup> (26)

GHATOTKACHA: “The Brāhman lad is certainly taking a long time. My mother’s meal-time is past. What shall I do now? Oh well, I’ll give a louder call—‘Hello! hello Middleman! come quickly!’”

BHĪMASENA: “Well, here I am!”

GHATOTKACHA: “Surely this is not the Brāhman lad! Hello! this fellow is worth looking at! For he

“Has the appearance of a lion, arms like golden<sup>60</sup> palm trees; he is slender at the waist; his flanks are burnished like the wings of Garuḍa. He might be Viṣṇu with his eyes like the petals of a full-blown lotus [*water-born*], and he draws my own eyes, upon his [*mere*] approach, as if he were a kinsman.<sup>61</sup> (27) O Madhyama, it is *you* I am calling!”

BHĪMASENA: “That’s just why I have come!”

GHATOTKACHA: “Are you, sir, Middleman, also?”

BHĪMASENA: “There is none other, I would have you know [*who deserves the name as I do*]!”

“The Middleman (midmost) am I of the invulnerables;<sup>62</sup> and of the haughty,<sup>63</sup> the Middleman; the Middleman of the earth<sup>64</sup> am I, dear sir; of my brothers,<sup>65</sup> also, Middleman.” (28)

GHATOTKACHA: “Well, it may be so [*what of it*]?”

BHĪMASENA: “Moreover Middleman among the five elements,<sup>66</sup> and of the Princes Middleman; in birth and in the world, the Middleman;<sup>67</sup> in all cases Middleman.”<sup>68</sup> (29)

BRĀHMAN: “Nay, if Middleman is announced, the Middleman of the Pāṇḍavas has assuredly come here to rescue us, having appeared because of the arrogance of [*one who is*] like death.”<sup>69</sup> (30)

[*Enter second Son.*]

MADHYAMA: “Sipping at this lotus-filled lake, I have given myself water clear as lotus petals, hard to be obtained in the other worlds.<sup>70</sup> (31) [*Approaches Ghatotkacha.*] Well friend, here I am!”



GHATOTKACHA: "You are indeed here at last! Come along, come along, Middleman!"<sup>71</sup>

BRĀHMAN [*Approaching Bhīmasena*]: "O Middleman, protect a Brāhman family."

BHĪMASENA: "Do not fear, do not fear! I, Middleman, salute you."

BRĀHMAN; "Live as long as Vāyu."<sup>72</sup>

BHĪMASENA: "I thank you. Where lies the danger to my lord?"

BRĀHMAN: "Listen: You must know that I am a Brāhman, named Keśavadāsa<sup>73</sup> of the clan of Māṭhara,<sup>74</sup> a priest of the ritual school,<sup>75</sup> inhabitant of the village of Yūpa,<sup>76</sup> located in the Kurujāṅgala,<sup>77</sup> a land formerly governed by Yudhisṭhira,<sup>78</sup> king of the Kurus. Now I, this Keśavadāsa, have an uncle by the name of Yajñabandhu,<sup>79</sup> of the clan of the Kāuśikas,<sup>80</sup> who lives in the village of Udyāmaka,<sup>81</sup> in the north country. I have set out with my wife to attend<sup>82</sup> his son's initiation."<sup>83</sup>

BHĪMASENA: "May your way be secure! What then?"

BRĀHMAN: "Then—this one here, you understand, "The ogre with body like a black rain-cloud,<sup>84</sup> with long eyes like lotus-petals, with the grace of movement of a lion, and ferocious teeth; without any fear in the world, even in the presence of such an one as you, came up to me surrounded by my sons, alas! and actually wanted to kill us." (32)

BHĪMASENA: "So the path of a Brāhman family has been blocked by this person. Very good; I shall at once punish him. Ho, fellow, stop! stop!"

GHATOTKACHA: "Well, I have stopped."

BHĪMASENA: "Why do you act as enemy<sup>85</sup> to the Brāhman?"

"Upon this aged Brāhman, who is, as it were, a moon surrounded by the constellations of his sons, and attended by the lovely radiance of his wife, you have come like Rāhu."<sup>86</sup> (33)

GHATOTKACHA: "Certainly; just like Rāhu!"

BHĪMASENA: "Ay, Fie!"

"You must release this noble Brāhman, who has turned his back on all activities, together with his wife and children, because his person is inviolate,<sup>87</sup> no matter what offences he may commit." (44)

GHATOTKACHA: "He shall not be released."

BHĪMAŚENA [*aside*]: "Hello! whose son can this be?"

"Who, pray, is this that has stolen the qualities of all my brothers? Seeing his youthful spirit, I am reminded of Abhimanyu.<sup>88</sup> (35)

[*Aloud*] "Look here, my friend! you must release him."

GHATOTKACHA: "He shall not be released.

"Even though my father<sup>89</sup> himself should affectionately bid me to release him, nevertheless I should not release him, because I took him at the command of my mother!" (36)

BHĪMAŚENA [*aside*]: "What does he mean by his mother's command? Ah, this devotee is certainly obedient to his parent.

"Truly Mother is the divinity of men and gods. By honoring Mother's commands we are come to this [*honorable*] estate.<sup>90</sup> (37)

[*Aloud*] "Listen, my friend! I have an important question to ask."

GHATOTKACHA: "Speak, speak quickly!"

BHĪMAŚENA: "What is the name of your mother, sir?"

GHATOTKACHA: "Listen! Her name is Hidimbā, the Ogress, "Who has been made most blessed in marriage by the great-souled Pāṇḍava, the light of the house of the Kurus, as the sky by the full moon." (38)

BHĪMAŚENA [*aside*]: "So this is Hidimbā's son? Well, his spirit is what one might expect of him!

"As for his figure, courage and strength, he is very much like his fathers;<sup>91</sup> but as for his heart, which is without pity for living creatures, of what sort is it? (39) [*Aloud*] Listen, my friend! he must be released."

GHATOTKACHA: "He shall not be released."

BHĪMAŚENA: "Brāhman, take your son [*and go*]. I will follow him [*Ghatotkacha*]."

MADHYAMA: "No, your honour, not so!

"My life has already been given up for the sake of the lives of my elders. May you, sir, who are still young and endowed with beauty and virtue, live long upon the earth!" (40)

BHĪMAŚENA: "No, sir, not so. I am sprung from a Kshatriya<sup>92</sup> family. A Brāhman, as every one knows, is above all others to be honored.<sup>93</sup> Therefore I wish with my own body to redeem<sup>94</sup> the body of a Brāhman."



GHATOTKACHA: "So this is a Kshatriya! Hence his spirit! Never mind, I shall kill and take away this boy and no other. Now, who will keep him from me?"

BHĪMASENA: "I shall!"

GHATOTKACHA: "What! You?"

BHĪMASENA: "Certainly!"

GHATOTKACHA: "In that case you, sir, must come yourself."

BHĪMASENA: "All right! But I will not follow any one because of his [*supposedly*] surpassing strength. If you have the power, then take me by force."

GHATOTKACHA: "Sir, do you know who I am?"

BHĪMASENA: "I know you are my son."

GHATOTKACHA: "What, what! I your son!"

BHĪMASENA: "How angry he gets! Excuse me, excuse me, sir! All common folk are termed sons to Kshatriyas. For that reason alone I used the term."

GHATOTKACHA: "If you are frightened, take to your arms!"

BHĪMASENA: "I swear truly, I do not know fear. I want your honour to acquaint me with it. Tell me, kind sir, what it looks like. Then, knowing its good and bad qualities, I shall do what is suitable." (41)

GHATOTKACHA: "I, right here, shall teach you fear. Take your weapon."

BHĪMASENA: "A weapon! This is what I take [*indicating his arm*]."

GHATOTKACHA: "What do you mean?"

BHĪMASENA: "Like a pillar of gold,<sup>95</sup> delighting in the subjugation of enemies, this my right arm is the weapon that suits me." (42)

GHATOTKACHA: "This is worthy of my father Bhīmasena."

BHĪMASENA: "Now, who is this person you call Bhīma?"

"Brahma,<sup>96</sup> Śiva,<sup>97</sup> Kṛishṇa,<sup>98</sup> Indra,<sup>99</sup> Skanda,<sup>100</sup> Yama,<sup>101</sup> say, my friend, like which one of these is your father?" (43)

GHATOTKACHA: "All."

BHĪMASENA: "For shame! That is a lie!"

GHATOTKACHA: "How is that? How is that? He says it is a lie! He reviles my father! Very well. I'll tear up this huge tree<sup>102</sup> and strike him. [*He tears it up and strikes him.*] How now? He cannot be killed even by this! What under

heaven shall I do? All right, I have it! I'll tear up this mountain peak and hurl it at him.

“The mountain peak thrown by me will take his life, and then pass on.”

BHĪMASENA : “A wild elephant, even though enraged, cannot overcome a tiger in the forest.”<sup>103</sup> (44)<sup>104</sup>

GHATOTKACHA [*hurling it*]: “How now? He cannot be killed even with this! What under heaven shall I do? All right, I have it!

“Am I not the son of Bhīmasena and the grandson of Vāyu? Stand now, and be on your guard! There is no one who is a match for me in hand-to-hand fight.”<sup>105</sup> (45)

[*With these words they engage in a hand-to-hand fight.*]

[*Having bound Bhīmasena*] “How will you now escape the prowess of my arms and get away? You are held fast by my arms, as an elephant by strong chains.”

BHĪMASENA [*aside*]: “See how he has caught me! Ah, Suyodhana!<sup>106</sup> The side of your enemies is surely gaining strength. Be on your guard! [*Aloud*] See here, my friend, take heed!”

GHATOTKACHA : “I am taking heed.”

BHĪMASENA [*shaking off the fetters*]:

“Lay aside your pride of strength! You have shown the best that is in you, my hero,<sup>107</sup> whereas I have not even felt weariness in this wrestling match.” (46)

GHATOTKACHA : “How now? He cannot be killed even with this! What under heaven shall I do? All right, I have it! I have a fetter of magic, received by my mother's grace. I shall bind him with it, and take him off. Where, pray, can I find water?<sup>108</sup> Ho mountain, some water at once! Ah, it flows! [*He sips it and mutters the charm.*] Now, my friend,

“Bound with a magic fetter and powerless, you shall not stir. You look fine, but are bound with cords, like the banner of Indra on a holiday.”<sup>109</sup> (47) [*With these words he binds him by magic.*]

BHĪMASENA : “How now! I am bound with a fetter of magic! What shall I do now? I have a charm, received by Śiva's grace,<sup>110</sup> that will loose the magic fetter. I shall recite it. Now where can I find water? Never mind; Brāhman lad, bring me a gourd full of water.”



BRĀHMAN:<sup>111</sup> “Here is water.”<sup>112</sup> [*Bhīmasena sips it, mutters the charm, and breaks the spell.*]

GHAṬOTKACHA: “Alas! The fetter has fallen off. What shall I do now? All right. See here, my friend; remember your former agreement.”<sup>113</sup>

BHĪMASENA: “The agreement? Yes, I remember. Go ahead.” [*The two walk about.*<sup>114</sup>]

BRĀHMAN: “Children, what shall we do? There goes Wolf-belly.”<sup>115</sup>

“After overcoming this ogre, who with his flaming, horrible form, is distinguished by the qualities of strength of arm and martial prowess, there he goes peacefully, like a bull who has easily shaken off a hard shower of rain.” (48)

GHAṬOTKACHA: “Stand here! I shall report your arrival to my mother.”

BHĪMASENA: “All right! Go!”

GHAṬOTKACHA [*approaching*]<sup>116</sup>: “Mother, I, Ghaṭotkacha, salute you. I have brought you for your dinner a man whom you have long desired,<sup>117</sup> madam.”

[*Enter Hidimbā.*]

HIDIMBĀ: “Son, long life to you! What kind of a man have you brought?”

GHAṬOTKACHA: “Lady, he is a man in speech alone, not in valour.”

HIDIMBĀ: “Is he a Brāhman?”

GHAṬOTKACHA: “Not a Brāhman.”

HIDIMBĀ: “Then, is he an old man?”

GHAṬOTKACHA: “He is not an old man.”

HIDIMBĀ: “Is he a child?”

GHAṬOTKACHA: “Not a child.”

HIDIMBĀ: “In that case, just let me have a look at him. [*The two walk around, approaching Bhīmasena.*] Is *this* the man you have brought?”

GHAṬOTKACHA: “Madam, who is this?”

HIDIMBĀ: “You idiot! Don’t you know this is a divinity?”<sup>118</sup>

GHAṬOTKACHA: “Why! Whose divinity?”

HIDIMBĀ: “Both yours and mine.”

GHAṬOTKACHA: “What is the proof?”



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[*Exit Keśavadāsa with wife and children.*]

BHĪMAŚENA : “ Hiḍimbā, come here please. My child Ghaṭotkacha, come here please. Let us accompany<sup>129</sup> his reverence Keśavadāsa at least as far as the entrance of the hermitage.

“ As<sup>130</sup> the ocean is lord of rivers, as the fire is lord of offerings,<sup>131</sup> as the mind is likewise lord of sense-organs,<sup>132</sup> thus may the blessed Viṣṇu<sup>133</sup> be our lord ! ” (51)

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

The end of the Madhyama Vyāyoga.



# NOTES ON MADHYAMA VYĀYOGA

1. Gaṇeśha.—Son of Śiva and Pārvati, or Pārvati only, the god of wisdom and remover of obstacles, propitiated at the beginning of any important undertaking, and invoked at the opening of books, as here. He is represented as a short fat man with protruding belly, four arms, and an elephant's head, with only one tusk.

2. Vyāyoga.—A kind of dramatic representation or composition in one act, with a fictitious plot, describing some military or heroic exploit, from which the sentiment of love is excluded.

3. Bhāsa.—See Introduction I.

4. Stage-director.—*Sūtradhāra* (literally, thread-holder) is the appellation of the stage-director, or principal actor, who superintends the whole performance; probably originally so called from holding the strings of puppets—which indicates in an interesting way one possibility as to the beginnings of the Sanskrit drama.

5. Viṣṇu.—Etymology uncertain, though Bloomfield suggests *vi-snu* (over the ridges). In the Vedic hymns his main activity consists in the “three strides,” the last of which brings him to *paramapada*, or highest place, the zenith. The mention of the “foot” here is an allusion to these strides. In the Epics and in late literature he is identified with the Supreme Being, though in other works he is characterized as the “Preserver” in the triad of which Brahma, the Creator, and Śiva, the Destroyer, are the other two members.

6. Asuras (demons).—Viṣṇu was the enemy of all *asuras*. There may be special reference here to one of the chief asuras, named Bali, who by his austerities won over the whole universe from the gods. Viṣṇu, when appealed to by the gods for help, assumed the form of a dwarf, and asked of Bali as much space as he could cover in three strides. Being granted the boon, he covered heaven and earth with the first two, and then stopped short out of regard for Bali, and left him the under world.

7. Blue.—The color characteristic of the gods.

8. Lotus.—The favourite flower of Hindu literature. Note the frequent references to the lotus in this play alone.

9. Cat's-eye.—Explained by the commentator as “pellucid blue,” used in allusion to Viṣṇu's foot. The commentator adds that there is here cryptic reference to the subject-matter of the play: Bhima being the “pass” or path of rescue for the Brāhman family through the Ocean of Danger.

10. Sir.—I have thus translated *tāta*, which later is translated by “father,” because till the actors appear we cannot tell to whom the words are addressed, and because the word is capable of either meaning.

11. Bhos.—Translated “O” above. A low-caste man would not be careful to pronounce it correctly.



12. Pāṇḍava.—See Introduction II.

13. Middleman.—See Introduction II. Middle son of Kuntī.

14. Hiḍimbā.—See Introduction III. The word translated “mother” is used also of the two rubbing sticks with which fire was produced, appropriate to Hiḍimbā’s relation to the “fire of an ogre.”

15. This.—To the emphatic pair of words (*sa esha*) thus translated, the commentator quotes a variant, *sarasha*, angry. If it were adopted, we should read,—“an angry Brāhman.”

16. Here ends the introduction.—The Sanskrit word so translated is *sthāpanā*, which, according to Dr. Lindenau, is regularly substituted in Bhāsa’s plays for *prāstāvanā*, the ordinary word for introduction.

17. Ghaṭotkacha.—The name means smooth as a *ghaṭa* or earthen water-pot. For the mention of this character in the Mahābhārata, see Introduction III.

18. Long eyes.—These were considered a mark of great beauty by the Hindus.

19. Śiva.—Gracious, kindly. The euphemistic name of the god of destruction and reproduction, the Vedic Rudra.

20. Destruction of the age.—The world is said by the Hindus to be destroyed periodically. At the end of each age, of which there have been three (the present one being the fourth), the world is destroyed and recreated. It is said that at the end of one of the ages, Śiva, by a single glance, reduced to ashes the whole universe, including the gods.

21. Tripura.—A city built for the demons by their architect, Maya, in heaven, atmosphere and earth, and constructed of gold, silver and iron. It was destroyed by Śiva in the war between the gods and demons.

22. Brāhman’s wife.—As usual in Sanskrit literature, the women in this play, both the Brāhman’s wife and Hiḍimbā, speak in Prākṛit, a broken-down form of Sanskrit.

23. Garuḍa.—Half man and half eagle, chief of the feathered race and enemy of the serpent race, vehicle and constant attendant of Viṣṇu.

24. Muni.—One moved by inward impulse, one who has taken the vow of silence; a saint, sage, seer.

25. Jalaklinna.—Literally, one wet with water. He is not mentioned elsewhere.

26. Like piles of darkness.—This interpretation involves taking *prabhā* in the sense of its cognate *nibhā*. Otherwise it must be translated as “rays consisting of piles of darkness”—a bold paradox, yet not out of keeping with Hindu proclivities (cf. Mahānāṭika, v, 201, found in Böhtlingk’s *Indische Sprüche*).

27. In this world (*iha*).—Here we have a veiled allusion to the doctrine of *karma*. The Brāhman knows very well that Ghaṭotkacha would in the next world or in another state of existence endure punishment for any wrong done to a Brāhman; but the point is that the Pāṇḍavas are able, here and now, before Ghaṭotkacha leaves this state, to inflict due punishment.

28. Rishi.—A sage, a man old in wisdom.

29. Dhāumya.—Family priest of the Pāṇḍavas.



30. Śatakumbha.—The word means “of a hundred jars.” This sacrifice receives its name from the hundred golden or gold-plated jars, full of *ghi* (clarified butter), etc., required for its performance. It is to be performed preferably in the month of Pús (December to January), at the conjunction of the constellation Pushya with the full moon. It is directed primarily to Vishnu, but includes the other members of the Triad. (Skanda Purāṇa XI, 3, 1-22.)

31. Vicinity.—By this statement the old man means that if Middleman is near by it is as good as having all the five Pāṇḍavas present.

32. First son.—Both the editions of the Madhyama Vyāyoga assign this speech to the first son. Yet it would seem more appropriate to assign it to one of the others, say the second son. The first son has already told his father that the Pāṇḍavas have gone away to the hermitage of Dhāumya, and then has modified his statement by saying that Bhima has been left to guard their own hermitage. It seems unlikely that he would now dash his father's hopes by telling him that Bhima also was far away, unless we are to suppose that he is playing with the old man's feelings. On the other hand, it would be quite reasonable for one of the others to impart some information not possessed by the first son.

33. Have done with fruitless labour.—*I.e.* What is the use of casting one's self upon the mercy of an ogre?

34. Fast.—The word thus translated has also the broader meaning of a religious act implying abstinence from all sensual gratification. As pointed out already, Hiḍimbā's object in having her son harass the Brāhman was to bring Bhīmasena back to her. In using this word in her order to Ghaṭotkacha she intends to convey a meaning of which he himself is entirely unconscious.

35. Worst of ogres.—Another *double entente*. The word translated “worst” signifies the offspring of a marriage of a high-caste man with a low-caste woman; in this case, of a Kshatriya with a Rākshasī. The form *apaśada*, given in the text (for *apasada*), seems not to be recorded lexically.

36. I.—If the variant *hā* for *ham* be accepted, “alas!” should be interjected before “I.”

37. Fire of the ogre.—Fire is appropriate to “sacrifice,” and also to the ogre, for the latter can take that form if he desires to make use of his illusions. (Cf. v. 3 above.)

38. No duty save toward her husband.—“Though destitute of virtue, or seeking pleasure (elsewhere), or devoid of good qualities, a husband must be constantly worshipped as a god by a faithful wife.” (*Laws of Manu*, V, 554.)

39. Borne its fruit.—Because the Brāhman's wife is now too old to give birth to sons.

40. The departed.—The shades of the ancestors. He is dear to them, for it is he who must make the sacrifices, consisting of daily oblations of water and of *pinḍas*, or balls of rice or meal, at stated occasions and places. These ceremonies ensure the shades a place in the Pitṛiloka, and later in Vishnu's heaven. For a detailed account see M. Williams' *Brahmanism and Hinduism*, page 303 ff.



41. To a father.—“The eldest brother must be considered as equal to one's father.” (*Laws of Manu*, IV, 184.)

42. Protection.—In the original the word translated “protection” is in the ablative case: a most unusual construction, explained by the commentator as an ablative of cause—as if the first son would say, “Therefore I myself will go because of the *desire* for the protection of my elders.”

43. He.—The second son uses the participial construction which leaves the verb impersonal—an effect which I have tried to bring out in the translation. The context makes it very clear that the first person is implied, and the commentator quotes a variant reading which gives the pronoun of the first person plural [the plural being used for the singular].

44. Death.—A variant, quoted by the commentator, substitutes the word “body.”

45. Come here, come here, son.—*I.e.* and embrace me before you go.

46. Redeemed.—The word so translated is “vinimāya,” derived from the compounded root vi-ni-mā. This root is not quoted by any Hindu or western Sanskrit lexicographer, though it is used twice in this play alone (cf. “vinimātum,” to redeem, note 94, below). The lexicons quote a verbal root “me,” to exchange, barter; “ni-me,” change, exchange, barter, is also quoted. But “vi-ni-me” is not quoted. The nearest approach to that compound root quoted is the noun “vinimaya,” exchange, barter, etc. Perhaps it would be a more literal translation to use the word “exchange” in the text here, but the sense certainly requires some such word as “redeem.”

47. Heaven of Brahmā.—Brahmā is the impersonal Brahma, personified and thought of as the Creator, the first member of the triad of Brahmā, Vishnu, and Śiva. Translation to his heaven exempts from further rebirth, so that in wishing such a fate for his son the Brāhman was wishing for him the very best possible result of his self-sacrifice.

48. Third son.—The younger or otherwise inferior should always address the elder or superior first.

49. Something.—In place of *kimcit*, thus translated, a variant reading, *tāvat*, is quoted by the commentator—“please,” “just.” In any case the sense of the request is not altered.

50. Resolve—fixed.—*I.e.* to go to the other world.

51. Fault of my nature.—Ghaṭotkacha's ogreish nature appears in the command to the father to call his son, and breaks through his ordinary courtesy toward these Brāhmanas.

52. That is right.—Or, ironically, “That's a great idea!” (so Commentator.)

53. Middleman.—Here is the motif of the whole play. “Madhyama” means the “middle one.” As Ghaṭotkacha remarks immediately, it suits the second son, for he is the middle one between his brothers. But it is equally a name of Ghaṭotkacha's father, Bhīmasena. As this group of Brāhmanas is mentioned nowhere else, there is no way of proving that the lad's name was not Middleman (Madhyama), but it is quite possible that the elder son improvised the name for the occasion so that Ghaṭotkacha, in calling the lad, would at the same time be summoning his own father, who was



probably in the vicinity and would save the Brāhmans if he learned of their plight.

54. Call.—As the commentator remarks, the variant reading “go” is wrong, for it is inappropriate to the context.

55. Bhīmasena.—See Introduction II and III.

56. Arjuna.—*Dhanañjaya*, wealth-winner, prize-winner, is an epithet or name of Arjuna, the third of the Pāṇḍava princes.

57. Waist like a vajra.—*I.e.* because of its shape (tapering in the middle). The Vajra is the name given to the club of Indra with which, in the Vedic hymns, he is described as smiting the demons. It is identified later with the thunder-bolt, thus producing the connotation of might and hardness. It is represented as shaped like a double-headed axe.

58. Ogress.—This class of beings was supposed to be endowed with all the qualities just mentioned as belonging to Ghaṭotkacha. Note the dramatic irony in this passage. Bhīmasena has not yet recognized his son, though he has inferred the nature of Ghaṭotkacha's parentage from the characteristics he has displayed.

59. World-hero.—Or hero of the world, as distinguished from the gods, who belong to other worlds. In any case, the term cryptically applies to Bhima himself.

60. Golden palm tree.—Probably to be identified with *Ravenala Madagascariensis*; also called the Travellers' Tree. Its leaves take on a golden tint when caught at a low angle by the sun. (*Standard Cyclopædia of Horticulture*, Vol. V, p. 2,914.)

61. Kinsman.—Note the dramatic irony here; for a kinsman has certainly come, but Ghaṭotkacha does not recognize him!

62. Invulnerables.—Not to be smitten by enemies, a “kenning” for the Pāṇḍavas.

63. The haughty.—Of exceeding heroism, another “kenning” of the Pāṇḍavas.

64. Of the earth.—A variant reading gives “in the earth,” but the one adopted by the editor is preferable, as it is in keeping with the other genitives in the passage. The commentator explains that Bhima is Middleman of or in the earth, because as a human being he lives on the earth, which is middle world between heaven and the lower regions!

65. Of the brothers also, Middleman.—Bhima was of the sons of Kunti the middle one, being the second of her three sons. The commentator also says that the term *madhyama* could apply to any of the five Pāṇḍavas, save Yudhisṭhira, the eldest, and Sahadeva, the youngest.

66. The five elements.—Of which the world is formed—earth, water, fire, air (wind), ether. Bhima is only loosely Middleman among these, as Vāyu, his father, the wind-god, is the fourth of the elements.

67. In birth and in the world Middleman.—The word translated “birth” is susceptible of a large number of meanings, but the commentator indicates this as the proper one in the context. He makes no comment on the phrase, “in the world,” so it appears to be for the purpose of emphasizing the immediately preceding phrase. Bhima is here referring to his being the midmost of the three Pāṇḍava sons of Kunti.



68. In all cases.—This may be taken as a summing up of the preceding identifications and qualifications; or, as the commentator suggests, in the sense that Bhima here offers himself as a judge or arbitrator to settle the trouble between Ghaṭotkacha and his victims. The word “Kārya” may also mean duty, and if taken in that sense, we should have to render the phrase, “to perform all duties.”

69. Of death.—A variant quoted by the commentator puts the original of “death” in the nominative case, thus connecting it with the subject of the sentence, instead of comparing Ghaṭotkacha to death, as in the present text. We should then have to translate thus: Arisen like death (*i.e.* suddenly) because of insolence (*i.e.* Ghaṭotkacha’s).

70. Hard to be obtained in the other worlds.—*I.e.* he does not believe that in the worlds he expects to enter through death, there can be found another lake with water so clear.

71. Middleman, Middleman.—A variant quoted by the commentator omits one “Middleman.”

72. Vāyu.—The wind, father of Bhīmasena, proverbial for long life.

73. Keśavadāsa.—The name means the servant (slave) of Keśava, a name of Kṛishṇa. Neither the name nor any such character is known to the “Mahābhārata.”

74. Māthara.—It was customary to name a clan from an ancient and illustrious personage, and to identify a man by the name of his clan. Māthara signifies one in charge of a *matha* or convent, and was the name of an ancient sage, of whom little is known.

75. A priest of the ritual school.—The word “adhvaryu,” translated “priest,” is the name of the one who actually performs the physical labour of the sacrifice, and recites formulae which are preserved in the text usually called Yajur-veda (but here anomalously called *Kalpa*). Each Vedic and Brāhmanic priest belonged to some particular school. See Macdonell’s *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 174 ff.

76. Yūpa.—The name means a sacrificial post, *i.e.* the smooth post or stake to which the sacrificial victim was tied. Being thus connected with sacrifice, it is appropriate for a village of Brāhmins.

77. Kurujāṅgala.—A forest country in the upper part of the region lying between the Ganges and Jamna rivers, and at one time ruled over by the Pāṇḍavas.

78. Yudhisṭhira.—See Introduction II.

79. Yajñabandhu.—“Associate in the sacrifice,” thus befitting a Brāhman.

80. Kāuśikas.—Descendants of Kuśika, said to be father or ancestor of Viśvāmitra, a famous Kshatriya sage.

81. Udyāmaka.—Dealing with exertion or raising, as of an offering in sacrifice, therefore quite appropriate as the name of a Brāhman settlement.

82. To attend.—Literally, for the sake of attending. The word “anubhavana,” translated “attending,” does not appear to be lexically quoted, and hence is in the same class with the verb *vi-ni-mā* (verse 21). The word is derived from the compound root *anu-bhū*.



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100. Skanda.—Leader of Śiva's hosts against the demons; hence, god of war.

101. Yama.—Represents in the Veda the first man; hence the first to die, and the guide of departed spirits. Later he becomes king of the departed, and judge over them.

102. Tear up this huge tree.—This was with Bhima a favourite method of fighting, which Ghaṭotkacha inherited (cf. Mahābhārata, book IV. ch. 22, ch. 33). A variant quoted specifies the sāl tree, the wood of which is hard and very durable.

103. A wild elephant cannot overcome a tiger in the forest.—The Hindus noted innate enmity existing between various animals, which they put down in pairs. These are given in Dr. Bloomfield's discussion of the subject of animal enmities, in his article entitled "The Crow and the Palm Tree," in the *American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 40. Among these enmities is that between the tiger and elephant.

104. V. 44.—The unusual division of a verse between two parties in a dialogue, as in this case, is a customary mode of indicating a moment of extreme excitement in the progress of the plot.

105. Hand-to-hand fight.—In this case a wrestling bout, a form of combat in which both Bhīma and Ghaṭotkacha were adepts.

106. Suyodhana.—"A good fighter." He here apostrophises Duryodhana, also called Suyodhana, the leader of the army of the Kāuravas, warning him that a valiant ally for the Pāṇḍava hosts has appeared. See Introduction II.

107. Hero.—The word translated "hero" has likewise the meaning "son," especially in the early language.

108. Water.—The custom of sipping water for purification before engaging in a religious ceremony, in which category magic would naturally fall, is often referred to in the Law of Manu. (*E.g. Laws of Manu*, II, 222.)

109. Banner of Indra on a holiday.—There was an Indra festival, held for the purpose of securing rain (so the Commentator), at which the banner of the god was elevated on a gorgeously painted bamboo. The point of the comparison here is that the banner is of fine appearance, but can move only as carried by others.

110. By Śiva's grace.—Note the parallelism between this and the preceding speech of Ghaṭotkacha, only the idea is that Śiva's spell is as much more potent than Hidimbā's, as the god is more powerful than the ogress, the term here used for Śiva being The Great Lord.

111. Brāhman.—Bhima has addressed one of the sons, since he would be the more suitable one to serve the Kshatriya deliverer; but the old Brāhman is so eager to help Bhima that he does not wait for the boy to reply.

112. Water.—Perhaps the old man has a gourdful with him for the journey, or he may fill the gourd from the stream which Ghaṭotkacha has miraculously caused to flow.

113. Former agreement.—To go with Ghaṭotkacha on condition that the latter confesses his inability to take Bhima by force.

114. Walk about.—The audience is to understand that the two are proceeding to the home of Hidimbā.



115. Wolfbelly.—*Vrikodara*, so translated, was a name of Bhima because of his enormous appetite.

116. [*Approaching*].—*I.e.* approaching his mother. She has not yet appeared on the scene, so that what Ghaṭotkacha actually approaches is the curtain at the back of the stage.

117. A man—long desired.—Dramatic irony. Hiḍimbā primarily wanted Bhīmasena, her husband, of which fact her son knew nothing. He thought she merely wished a man by eating whom she could satisfy her longing for human flesh.

118. Divinity.—For he was the father of the family. In *Laws of Manu*, II, 225-237, the father, mother and teacher are placed on the same plane of venerability, and the reverence paid by a wife to her husband is as definitely prescribed.

119. When we had lost our kingdom, etc.—A reference to the first meeting of Bhīma with Hiḍimbā (cf. Introduction III).

120. [*In his ear*].—It is now that Hiḍimbā confesses to her husband why she sent Ghaṭotkacha to attack the Brāhman family : *viz.* in order to bring him, Bhīmasena, back to her. Her love for him pleases Bhima, as is shown in his next remark.

121. Idiot.—Ghaṭotkacha has forgotten his proper behaviour toward his father, being stupified at the enormity of the offence he has committed in bringing his father to be eaten by his mother. He is brought to his senses by Hiḍimbā.

122. Sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra.—The Kāurava princes. Ghaṭotkacha promises here to remove the stain of his misdemeanor by doing valliantly in the battle soon to take place between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kāuravas.

123. Has had a delightful result.—A variant reading, *kshāntam*, is quoted for *kāntam* in the text. If this be accepted, we must read, "The impropriety. . . . is certainly pardoned." The "impropriety" was in opposing Bhima, while the "delightful result" came in Bhima's realization of his son's prowess.

124. The hearts of your fathers.—The Pāṇḍava princes are depending on Ghaṭotkacha for the victory over their foes.

125. Excellence.—The commentator explains this as meaning the quality of mercy, which has been shown so markedly by Bhima, but which was absent in his son.

126. Exalted.—By the very act of preserving the Brāhman family. If we translate *uddhṛitam* as "strengthened" instead of "exalted," the Brāhman means that the family of Bhima has been strengthened through the discovery of his son's valor.

127. Kindness of your honor.—A characteristically Oriental mode of expression ; cf. an ordinary response to an inquiry for a friend's health : "By the prayers of your honor, all is well."

128. May we meet again.—Literally, "To an again-seeing." The French "Au revoir," or German "Auf Wiedersehen," would render it more accurately.



129. Accompany.—Displaying Oriental courtesy and desiring to protect from any possible further danger.

130. Verse 51 belongs no more to the action of the drama than does verse 1, but is merely a benediction on performance and audience pronounced by the principal character in the play.

131. Fire is lord of offerings.—The word translated “fire” is, more literally, “libation-eater.” The sacrificial fire devours whatever is offered, and hence is lord of it.

132. Mind is lord of sense-organs.—These organs are enumerated as five organs of perception (eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin) and five of action (larynx, hands, etc.). Above these as the gateway to the Self is the “*manas*,” or mind, which, while still perishable like the other organs, yet is in control of them and hence is their lord.

133. The blessed Vishṇu.—According to Dr. Lindenau, Bhāsa was a strong Vāishṇavite. The preeminent place he gives Vishṇu at the beginning and end of this drama bears out the idea.